



EXHIBIT 8
DATE 3/19/09
SB 337

March 18, 2009

**Testimony opposing SB 337,
An Act prohibiting the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
from relocating wild buffalo or bison as a result
of the state-federal bison quarantine feasibility study.**

Mr. Chair and committee members, my name is Carolyn Duckworth, and I live in Gardiner, Montana. I am the President of Bear Creek Council, whose 75 members live near the bison quarantine facility.

We know that the wildlife professionals who manage this facility have taken every precaution to keep these bison safe and to protect the surrounding private landowners, some of whom keep livestock. We also know that this project has significantly advanced wildlife and livestock management science.

We also know that throughout the development phases, which were completely public and open to comment, the state and federal agencies clearly stated the final outcome of this quarantine research was relocating the bison to tribes and other interested public parties.

Furthermore, we believe SB 337 is not good for the state of Montana because:

- Its lack of faith in APHIS protocols will throw the safety practices of the state's livestock industry into question.
- It identifies Montana as a state that does not believe scientific research is a sound basis for management.
- Its anti-bison stance will give the state of Montana yet another black eye in bison management.
- This stance, by perpetuating a negative view of our state nationwide, directly threatens Montana businesses that depend on tourism.

Therefore, Bear Creek Council's members believe the committee is putting Montana's livestock and tourism industries at risk by advancing this bill. We ask you to kill this bad bill now, in committee.

Respectively submitted by
Carolyn Duckworth, President
Bear Creek Council
P.O. Box 448
Gardiner, MT 59030
406-223-0669; duckworth@wispwest.net

Testimony opposing SB 337, March 19, 2009
An act prohibiting the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, from relocating bison as a result of the state-federal bison quarantine feasibility study.

Mr. Chair and committee members, my name is Ilona Popper and I live in Gardiner, MT. I oppose SB 337.

The Department of Livestock opposes SB 337.

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks opposes SB 337.

Here's why:

1. Bison in these quarantine facilities have exceeded all testing standards required by APHIS. They've passed higher tests than any in the world for cattle or domestic bison. The protocols were developed by experts, approved by the US Animal Health Association, open to the livestock industry, and are part of the bison EIP and the Interagency Bison Management plan. Montana FWP and the Board of Livestock reviewed the protocols—twice. **The quarantine protocols and testing of bison eliminate disease as a concern for bison coming from the quarantine facilities.**
2. Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' process for placing the bison makes sure that bison sent from quarantine cannot go to any sites where there's a risk of the animals getting loose. **If the tribes cannot rigorously prove that they can contain the bison, FWP will not give them the bison.**
3. Montana FWP's role was established in rigorous protocols and part of the process is for FWP to discover whether this plan is in fact feasible. FWP has just begun this process of seeing if the state can place disease-free bison around the state. **Let Montana FWP do its job and explore the possibility of seeing if brucellosis-free bison can be returned to the landscape.**

FWP has already decided that this first group of bison will go to the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming--if this reservation meets all the criteria for containing and caring for the animals. That means, it will be at least a year before Montana tribes can even apply for bison on their reservations. That's more than enough time for Montana FWP to do its rigorous screening and for the tribes to prepare proper containment.

Please vote against SB 337.

Thank You,

Ilona Popper
PO Box 981
Gardiner, MT 59030
406-223-9632